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Agenda items 2 and 7

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 58/26 of 4 April 2025 on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the matter at its sixty-first session.

* The present document was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 58/26, in which the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council on the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Security Council decided, *inter alia*, that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel rescind forthwith its decision.
2. In the same resolution, the Human Rights Council, *inter alia*, deplored the continuing settlement policies and practices in the occupied Syrian Golan, including the plans announced at the end of 2021 to establish and expand illegal settlements and to double the numbers of the settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan within the coming years, and demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately cease all settlement-related plans and activities in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to cease changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, and emphasized that the displaced persons of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan must be allowed to return to their homes and to recover their property.
3. The Council, in paragraph 11 of the resolution, requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations, to disseminate it as widely as possible and to report on the matter to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-first session.

II. Implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 58/26

4. On 3 November 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), on behalf of the Secretary-General, addressed a note verbale to the Government of Israel referring to Council resolution 58/26 and requesting information on steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of the resolution. At the time of finalizing the present report, no reply had been received.
5. On the same day, on behalf of the Secretary-General, OHCHR addressed a note verbale to all permanent missions and permanent observer missions in Geneva to draw their attention to Council resolution 58/26 and to request that they provide information on any steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution. The Permanent Missions of Iraq, Jordan, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic responded to this request.
6. Also on the same day, on behalf of the Secretary-General and pursuant to resolution 58/26, OHCHR addressed a communication to the competent United Nations organs, specialized agencies, international and regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations to bring the resolution to their attention.

III. Replies received

A. Syrian Arab Republic

7. On 1 December 2025, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Geneva addressed a note verbale to OHCHR concerning the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 58/26. The Syrian Arab Republic underscored that the resolution, and other relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, remained unimplemented by the occupying Power, Israel. Those included Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws,

jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect.

8. The Syrian Arab Republic recalled that, since 1967, the international community had rejected the occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan and repeatedly called for its end, including through numerous resolutions that stressed the need for the complete withdrawal of Israel to the line of 4 June 1967 and the cessation of all practices violating the rights of the Syrian population under occupation.

9. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that Israel continued to violate the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic and breach the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces through ongoing acts of aggression that had caused casualties and extensive damage under what it considered unfounded pretexts, in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and posing a direct threat to regional and international peace and security.

10. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that, following the fall of the former Syrian regime on 8 December 2024, Israel, the occupying Power, had dangerously expanded its occupation by committing a grave breach of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Israel had seized parts of the demilitarized separation zone and occupied the Mount Hermon Observatory, exploiting circumstances surrounding the liberation of the Syrian Arab Republic from the former regime. The Syrian Arab Republic affirmed that the military expansion constituted a new act of aggression and a blatant violation of relevant international resolutions, especially the resolution establishing the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, undermining the foundations of the ceasefire arrangements in place for decades. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that that serious breach had had direct humanitarian and security consequences for Syrian residents in villages adjacent to the separation zone, including denying farmers access to their lands, exposing civilians to the risks of Israeli military operations and disrupting daily life and development activities in the area. The Syrian Arab Republic demanded the immediate and unconditional return of Israel to the situation that had existed before 8 December 2024, respect for its obligations under the 1974 Disengagement Agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions, and an end to any further encroachment on the separation zone or its use for military, settlement or security activities.

11. The Syrian Arab Republic stressed that the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan continued to categorically reject attempts to impose illegal Israeli jurisdiction on them, as evidenced by their boycott of the so-called “local elections”, as an expression of their adherence to their national identity and their rejection of any form of annexation.

12. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the occupying authorities continued to impose effective military control over the Golan in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), which constituted a continuous violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law and a clear indication of the adoption of a systematic policy of aggression.

13. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned the continued settlement activities of Israel in the occupied Golan, including the plans announced at the end of 2021 to double the number of settlers within five years, expand settlements, build new settlement units, seize Syrian land and establish projects, such as wind farms spanning more than 6,000 dunams. It affirmed that those practices constituted a violation of the obligations of the occupying Power under international law, particularly the principle prohibiting the exploitation of resources or land in occupied territory for the benefit of the occupying Power, and constituted a systematic violation of fundamental human rights, including the rights to health, housing and a decent standard of living.

14. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the settlement policies were accompanied by a series of what the Syrian Arab Republic considered discriminatory and colonial measures, most notably the confiscation of land, restrictions on the urban growth of the occupied Syrian villages, denial of residents’ access to their natural resources and the imposition of Israeli legal systems that violated the principle of the unity and integrity of the occupied territories.

15. The Syrian Arab Republic underlined that restrictions on the agricultural sector persisted as part of what the Syrian Arab Republic considered a racist plan aimed at promoting agricultural activities in settlements at the expense of Syrian farmers' lands, which constituted a violation of the right to work and sustainable development.

16. The Syrian Arab Republic further noted that the occupation authorities continued to pressure Syrian citizens to accept Israeli property ownership documents instead of documents issued by the Syrian State, which it considered an unlawful attempt to alter the legal status of the occupied land and to facilitate its appropriation through arbitrary procedures, including those carried out by courts of the occupying Power.

17. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that the housing crisis in the villages of the occupied Golan had worsened due to restrictions preventing Syrian residents from building and the refusal to expand zoning plans, in direct violation of the rights to housing and to a dignified standard of living.

18. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that the occupying authorities continuously sought to impose Israeli citizenship and identity on the Syrian population, deny Syrians contact with their homeland and prevent them from exercising their social and cultural rights, which constituted a blatant violation of relevant international covenants.

19. The Syrian Arab Republic referred to a report of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization,¹ which, it said, highlighted the continued violations against Syrian workers in the Golan, including discrimination and restrictions on employment opportunities and limitations on trade union rights.

20. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that the occupation authorities continued to exploit the healthcare situation as a means of pressure by imposing costly health insurance systems and depriving residents of access to adequate medical services. The Syrian Arab Republic noted that Syrian doctors and students in the Golan also encountered severe restrictions on movement, as well as obstacles to accessing universities and scientific activities in their homeland.

21. The Syrian Arab Republic affirmed that the continued disregard by Israel for United Nations resolutions, including Human Rights Council resolution 58/26, constituted a flagrant violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and called for:

- The rejection of any direct or indirect support for the policies of the occupying Power in the occupied Syrian Golan, including economic or tourism-related activities in the settlements.
- Obliging Israel to comply with international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 497 (1981) and 2334 (2016), as well as the 1974 Disengagement Agreement.
- Updating the database of businesses to include those involved in settlement activities in the occupied Golan and holding accountable all entities that contributed directly or indirectly to entrenching the occupation.
- Reopening the Qunaytirah crossing to allow the people of the Golan to exercise their rights to freedom of movement, education, healthcare and family visits, in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law.
- Taking effective measures to monitor and document Israeli violations in the occupied Golan and holding the occupying authorities legally accountable for the harm inflicted on the population and the land.

22. Finally, the Syrian Arab Republic reiterated that the occupied Syrian Golan was an integral part of its territory, and that its restoration through all legitimate means recognized under international law was an inalienable right that did not lapse with time. The Syrian Arab Republic affirmed that achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East required the full

¹ Document ILC.113/DG/APP.

implementation of all resolutions related to ending the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, including the occupied Syrian Golan.

B. Iraq

23. On 26 November 2025, the Permanent Mission of Iraq addressed a note verbale to OHCHR concerning the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 58/26. Iraq noted that the human rights system highlighted a set of essential rights that formed fundamental pillars for every individual in society, requiring attention, protection and enjoyment in accordance with international human rights law and domestic legislation. Those included:

- As affirmed in article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the right of all peoples to self-determination, to freely determine their political status, and to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources. Iraq added that the Covenant recognized a comprehensive set of rights and obligated each State Party to respect and ensure those rights to all individuals within its territory.
- Rights and freedoms, established under various international human rights instruments, that States must recognize and guarantee for all individuals within their territory or under their control. Those included the right to nationality, the right to travel and movement, and freedom of expression. Iraq added that those rights constituted an operational framework that States were expected to uphold.
- The prohibition of demographic change. Iraq noted that international human rights law contained no provision that permitted States or Governments to conduct demographic or population changes. Iraq also noted that international human rights law therefore granted affected individuals the right to pursue all measures necessary to safeguard their rights under the law.

24. Iraq further referred to General Assembly resolution 79/83 of 3 December 2024 and stressed that, in the resolution, the imposition by Israel of its laws and administration on the occupied Golan was considered null and void and lacking any validity and continued occupation was considered to undermine lasting peace. Iraq also cited General Assembly resolution 79/90 of 4 December 2024, in which the General Assembly called on Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan, and determined all legislative or administrative measures that purported to alter its status null and void. Iraq indicated that, in the resolution, an end to the imposition of Israeli citizenship on Golan residents was demanded, repressive measures by the occupying Power condemned and all States urged not to recognize any such measures. Iraq added that, in the resolution, it was reiterated that settlements in occupied territories, including the Golan, were illegal and must cease.

25. Iraq added that General Assembly resolution 79/91 referred to Security Council resolution 2334 of 2016, in which the Security Council stated that it would not recognize changes to the 4 June 1967 lines. Iraq noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution, further clarified that the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, had concluded that the policies and practices of occupation amounted to annexation of large areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, contrary to the prohibition on the use of force in international relations and its corollary principle of the inadmissibility of the non-acquisition of territory by force. Iraq also referred to the occupied Golan in this context.

Iraq highlighted that the resolution

“called on the occupying power to comply with its legal obligations as set out in the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 and 19 July 2024, including ending its unlawful presence in the occupied territories, halting all settlement activities, evacuating all settlers, and putting an end to its unlawful practices, including the repeal of all legislation and measures that establish or maintain the unlawful situation, including discriminatory measures and demographic changes.”

26. Finally, Iraq stated that:

- It supported and endorsed the legitimate demand of the Syrian Arab Republic to regain full sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan.
- The occupation of the Syrian Golan constituted a continuous threat to regional and international peace and security.
- It rejected the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and condemned all measures taken by the occupying authorities to alter the legal, natural, and demographic status of the territory.
- It considered all such actions aimed at consolidating Israeli control to be illegal, null, and void, and rejected any recognition by any State of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan.
- It supported all international resolutions that condemned the occupation of the Golan and rejected attempts by the occupying Power to impose a fait accompli.
- It called on the international community to reject any measures intended to change the legal status of the Golan and to work seriously towards ending the occupation and upholding United Nations resolutions.

C. Jordan

27. On 21 November 2025, the Permanent Mission of Jordan addressed a note verbale to OHCHR concerning the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 58/26.

28. Jordan reaffirmed the illegality of all Israeli measures taken since the beginning of the annexation and occupation, in accordance with Security Council resolutions and all relevant international decisions.

29. Jordan emphasized that the occupied Syrian Golan was an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and that its recovery was an inherent right that must be realized through all means permitted under international law.

30. Jordan affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in addition to the relevant provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, to the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan.

31. Jordan reiterated that Israel was an occupying Power and that the establishment and expansion of settlements, the imposition of Israeli laws and administration on the occupied Golan, and all actions aimed at altering its demographic, urban or legal character constituted blatant violations of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Jordan emphasized that Israel must immediately cease all such illegal practices.

32. Jordan reaffirmed the obligation on Israel to comply with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the occupation of the Syrian Golan.

33. Jordan stressed the necessity for Israel to halt all provocative and escalatory actions undertaken recently, including the entry of the Prime Minister of Israel and several ministers and officials into Syrian territory, its repeated attacks within the Syrian Arab Republic and unilateral measures aimed at undermining the security and stability of the Syrian Arab Republic, which further exacerbated tension and instability throughout the region.

D. Mexico

34. On 26 November 2025, the Permanent Mission of Mexico addressed a note verbale to OHCHR concerning the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 58/26. In that regard, Mexico stated that it had maintained a position consistent with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter, including resolution 497 (1981). It further stated that that position likewise applied to the legislative or administrative measures referenced in Human Rights Council resolution 58/26.